

TRIP REPORT – LATE AUGUST PERMIT TRIP ON THE RISING TIDE

Anglers: Art Hinckley (126 permit), Billy Taylor (first SW flats trip), and myself (55 permit)

Raw numbers:

Permit seen – 1059 (included schools of 100, 70, and 50 fish and at least 25 schools of 8 to 20 fish)

Tailing fish – 187

Shots – 130

Eats – 13 (includes five fish of 20+ pounds)

Fish released – 5 (includes a 21# and a 24#)

Numbers Commentary:

Fish weren't eating well. This may be a record low ratio of shots to eats and released fish.

However, there were lots of fish and shots.

Conditions:

One day of double layered clouds, a few clear days, and the rest mostly clear or partly cloudy.

Winds were higher than usual for this time of year with a few days of 20+.

Highlights and Lowlights:

- Our second day had perfect conditions – clear skies, light winds, incoming tide most of the day and was our least productive day.
- Two exceptional afternoons of wade-stalking were encountered. On those two occasions, two anglers fished a string of flats south of Wee Wee Cay. Collectively for the two afternoons, the flats held over 70 tailing fish, largely singles, pairs, and threesomes. They had over 25 shots while wading.....again, the eats were tough to get (one 7# fish released), but the thrills and challenges were exceptional,
- Art had a heartbreak morning. Before breakfast, he had eats from two fish over 20#. One broke off after 5 minutes and the other broke the hook. However, he would recover with a beautiful weighed 24# fish caught within 300 yards of the anchored Rising Tide at Bluefield.
- Billy took his first ever permit, a 21 pounder; also, his first tarpon in a channel in the reef (35#).
- Large fish were present in numbers.....several schools of 8 to 15 fish with many in the 15-20+ range. Saw some fish that would have been 30+. Two of the large schools we found (one of 50 and one of 100) both held a good percentage of 15-20+ fish. Both of those giant schools were at Alligator. Overall, in the last year, the average size of the permit found have been larger than ever before. Maybe the recent laws on preventing the killing of Belize's major sportfish are having an impact.....no one knows for sure, but we are certain about the average size of permit being larger.
- Don had a two fish afternoon (largest was 12#) and had a 20+ pound fish on for 15 minutes on the last day before the hook pulled.....big letdown!
- Only saw one other angler and that was just for a short time when some guys went south from Sand Fly.
- The guides were exceptional, putting in their usual long hours each day and the crew overall were outstanding.
- We all agreed that it seemed that we had a good number of highly entertaining and exciting permit experiences for only five fish released. Go figure.....its permit fishing!

Don Muelrath

